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# OT 520 Old Testament Introduction

Sandra Richter

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# OT 520

## Introduction to the Old Testament

Asbury Theological Seminary  
January 2006

**INSTRUCTOR:**

Dr. Sandra Richter  
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SPO 1320  
Office: BC317, 858-2032

**OFFICE HOURS:**

Tues-Thurs 1:00-2:00 pm

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is designed to lay a foundation for the rest of the student's seminary career by familiarizing the student with the story of Redemption as told in the Old Testament. To accomplish this goal, the student will be exposed to the geographical and socio-historical context from which the Old Testament emerges; the genre, content, historical flow, and theological structure of the Old Testament Canon; and the scholarship which has sought for generations to understand this collection of Scripture. It is my hope that this class will provide the student with a **framework** for their study of the OT, while investing in each a profound excitement and respect for these sacred texts.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- 1) To become familiar with the history and geography of the biblical world in order to contextualize the OT narrative in real space and time.
- 2) To become familiar with the sociological structure of the biblical world in order to contextualize OT personalities within the societal and relational structures from which they emerge. (This cross-cultural exercise will also further equip the student to cross-culturally communicate in a responsible manner within their own context of ministry.)
- 3) To become familiar with the intentional theological structure of the OT in order to relate its message of redemption to that of the New and to the contemporary Christian community.
- 4) To be exposed to issues of genre and authorship in order to facilitate future study and exposition of the text for the purposes of Christian ministry.
- 5) To engage the major questions of OT study and scholarship (historicity, canonicity, authorship) in order to equip the student to respond to these same questions for those they are called to serve.



## **COURSE PROCEDURES & REQUIREMENTS:**

### **Method of Instruction:**

The format of the class will be primarily lecture, augmented by visual presentations and small and large group discussion. Student responsibilities will include a careful **reading** of a broad selection of materials in required and recommended texts.

### **Textbooks:**

The required and recommended textbooks are on reserve in the library. Both the textbooks and the Course Packet are available for purchase at the bookstore. There will be numerous **handouts** for this class which will be distributed *once* in class, and always available in the Course Icon on the Intranet.

#### **Required**

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form and Background of the OT*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996)

James B. Pritchard, ed. *The HarperCollins Concise Atlas of the Bible* (HarperSanFrancisco, 1997)

Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel Its Life and Institutions in the Biblical Resource Series* (Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans/Livonia: Dove Book Sellers, 1997)

WJ Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel: A Theological Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002)

#### **Recommended**

Jon Levenson, *Sinai & Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (HarperSanFrancisco, 1985)

Brevard S. Childs, *OT Theology in a Canonical Context* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985)

**Coursepacket** (a number of your required readings are found here)

## **REQUIREMENTS**

**10% BOOK REVIEW.** A three-four page book review of Jon Levenson's *Sinai & Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* is due **by the final day of the semester at 5:00 pm**. This review should answer the following three questions: (1) What is the content of this book?; (2) How does this content interact with other course material?; (3) What is the student's response to the information and arguments presented in this book? This book review must be well-written, presented in standard form, clean and critical. (In reading Levenson's book, some people find it helpful to read the "Introduction" last.) Reviews received after the posted hour will be penalized a third of a grade per day, weekends included! Proper form and further instructions are available in "How to Write a Book Review" on the Intranet.

**15% QUIZZES:** Every Tuesday there will be a quiz: one on geography, one on the timeline, one on specified identifications from your reading. Each will be worth 5% of your grade.

**35% TAKE HOME ESSAYS:** Every week there will one or two weekend "take home" essay(s) assigned. You will be expected to answer these essays by means of integrating class lecture with reading assignments. You must show evidence in these essays that you have done your reading and assimilated class content. Citation of reading material and lecture is required—without it the essay will not be graded any higher than a "C." The form of citation may be simplified to simply the author's name and page number. If there is more than one reading from a particular author from that week, the title of the reading will also be expected.

**40% FINAL EXAM.** This will be scheduled on the closing day of the semester. It will involve identifications to be written and to be matched, and essays. To score an "A" on the midterm and final exam the student must show evidence of having critically synthesized reading material and class presentations and must display familiarity with the bulk of the recommended readings.

**GROUPS.** *Most* Thursday/Fridays we will break into small discussion groups in order to evaluate some aspect of the assigned reading and synthesize it with class material.

Attendance in these groups will be recorded. One absence from the discussion groups will

be waived, additional absences will result in the deduction of 2 percentage points from your final evaluation. Although not required, it is strongly suggested that students use their discussion groups as study groups in order to provide further opportunity to process and interact with course material and prep for exams.

**PRESENCE**, preparedness and participation are always expected. Class absences will be considered in your final evaluation.

## READING & LECTURE SCHEDULE

# Part I: The Big Picture

### 1/3 INTRODUCTION & THE BIBLE AS THE STORY OF REDEMPTION

#### THE OT IN TIME & SPACE

De Vaux, pp. 3-61, "Nomadism & Family Institutions"

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, "Geography," pp. 619-631

Atlas, pp. 8-13, **36**, 60-61

**Recommended:** Lawrence Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel" *BASOR* 260 (1985): 1-35.

### 1/4 THE CONCEPT OF COVENANT

quiz

M. Weinfeld, "tyrb *דבר* *בית* *בית* *בית*," *TDOT*, pp. 253-79 (\*265-276)

Frank Cross, "Kinship and Covenant in Ancient Israel" in *From Epic to Canon*, pp. 3-22

Kenneth Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament*, 90-102.

**Recommended:** "Covenants & Treaties," *Readings from the Ancient Near East*, ed. Bill Arnold and Bryan Beyer, 97-103

#### MORE ON COVENANT

"The Book of the Covenant" Exodus 19:1-23:19

Deuteronomy 1:1-6:25; 28:1-30:20; Isaiah 1:1-31; Jer 34:18-20

**Recommended:** Deuteronomy 6:26-34:12 (i.e. the rest of Deuteronomy)

56 LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, "Deuteronomy," pp. 111-127

### 1/5 GOD'S ORIGINAL INTENT: EDEN

quiz

Genesis, chapters 1-4, Psalm 8

Henri Blocher, "Approaching Genesis" and "The Week of Creation" in *In the Beginning*, pp. 15-59

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 15-31, "Genesis: Primeval Prologue"

**Recommended:** Matthews & Benjamin, *Old Testament Parallels*, "Enuma Elish, pp. 7-15 (cf. *ANET*, pp. 31-39); Childs, "Male & Female as a Theological Problem," 188-192

#### GOD'S FINAL INTENT: THE NEW JERUSALEM

Exodus 24:12-26:37 (looking for *cherubim*, rivers, and trees)

Ezekiel 47:1-12 (if this is the first time you've read Ezekiel, read a summary of the book and this particular section of the book in a Bible handbook, Eerdmans is excellent)

Revelation 19:11-22:21

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, "The Authority of the OT," "Revelation," "Canon," pp. 585-605 34

### 1/6 NOAH

quiz

Genesis 5:1-11:32

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 32-51, "Genesis: Patriarchal History"

Atlas, 58-59

Dumbrell, "Introduction; Genesis" pp. 9-31

**Recommended:** Matthews & Benjamin, *Old Testament Parallels*, "Atrahasis," 16-27; "The Gilgamesh Epic," pp. 35-41 (cf. *ANET*, pp. 40-75)

## ABRAHAM

Genesis 12:1-36:43

Atlas, 14-17

Childs, "The Recipients of God's Revelation," 92-103

Reread Weinfeld *TDOT*, pp. 270-272

**Recommended:** Gary Knoppers, "Ancient Near Eastern Royal Grants and the Davidic Covenant: A Parallel?" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116/4 (1996): 670-97; K. Kitchen, "The Patriarchal Age: Myth or History?" *BAR* (March 1995): 48-57; 88-95 (this will be required reading later; this article can be accessed through the Biblical Archaeology Review Archive link at the library. Simply log on, click on the archive, and enter some of the bibliographic data into the search fields)

## 1/10 MOSES

quiz

Genesis 37, 39-41, 47:1-Exodus 18:27

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 63 -79, "Exodus: Message"

Atlas, pp. 34-35, "Exodus & Wanderings"

Childs, "The Theological Significance of the Decalogue," pp. 63-83, *OT Theology in a Canonical Context*

**Recommended:**

Childs, "Benefits of the Covenant: the Cultus," pp. 155-172

## EXCURSUS: THE TABERNACLE: "So that I may dwell among them..." Exodus 25:8

G.R. Osborn, "Type, Typology," pp. 1117-19

Exodus 24-34 (some review here)

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, 80-98, "Leviticus"

Dumbrell, "Exodus; Leviticus; Numbers," pp. 32-56

**Recommended:** de Vaux, pp. 274-311: "Semitic Sanctuaries," "The First Israelite Sanctuaries"

## 1/11 DAVID

quiz

1 Samuel 16:1-2 Samuel 12:31

Atlas, pp. 46-51, "The Kingdom of Saul," "David's Rise to Power," "David's Consolidation"

LaSor, Hubbard, & Bush, "Deuteronomy – Former Prophets," 111-137

**Recommended:** Childs, pp. 108-119, "Agents of God's Rule: Moses, Judges, Kings"

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## THE NEW COVENANT:

Scott Hafemann, *Paul, Moses and the History of Israel*: "The Meaning of the 'New Covenant' in Jeremiah 31," pp. 129-40

Matt 1:1-3:17; 21:1-11

Gal 2; 3:15-29

Luke 1

1 Corinthians 15

John 1:1-34; 14:1-7

Hebrews, chptrs 8-11

**Recommended:**

Jon Levenson, *The Death & Resurrection of the Beloved Son*, pp. 1-17; \*25-31

N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 231-257

# Part II: Close Ups

## 1/12 THE PENTATEUCH: STRUCTURE & AUTHORSHIP

The Book of Numbers

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 3-14 "Pentateuch"

"JEDP-in-a-nutshell" Handout

Frank M. Cross, "The Priestly Work," *Canaanite Myth & Hebrew Epic*, pp. 291-324

**Recommended:** *Face*, pp. 116-144, "Pondering the Pentateuch: The Search for a New Paradigm"

## THE PATRIARCHS

quiz

Genesis 25:1-37:36

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, "The Chronological Puzzle," 632-640

**Further LaSor reading?**

K. Kitchen, "The Patriarchal Age: Myth or History?" *BAR* (March 1995): 48-57; 88-95 (this article can be accessed through the Biblical Archaeology Review Archive link at the library. Simply log on, click on the archive, and enter some of the bibliographic data into the search fields)

[**Review** Atlas, pp. 14-21, "Abraham's Migration" etc; LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 32-51]

**Recommended:** J. Hackett, "Women's Studies & the Hebrew Bible," 141-63.

1/13 **THE EXODUS: MYTH OR HISTORY?**

Reread Exodus 13:1-19:6

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 52-62 "Exodus: Historical Background"; pp. 641-57 [skim 658-87] "Archaeology";

Kevin D. Miller, "Did the Exodus Never Happen?" *Christianity Today* 42/10 [Sept 1998]: 44-51

Atlas, pp. 18-21, *review* p. 34

**Recommended:** J. Hoffmeier, "Egypt, Plagues in" *ABD* 2:374-78

de Vaux, "Slaves," pp. 80-90

1/17 **THE DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY: STRUCTURE & AUTHORSHIP**

**quiz**

Dumbrell, "Deuteronomy-Judges," 57-80

Frank Cross, "The Themes of the Book of Kings and the Structure of the Deuteronomistic History," *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, pp. 274-289.

Review Deuteronomy chptrs 1-4; Joshua chapters 1, 12 (summary of conquest battles) and 23; Judges 2:11-23; 1 Samuel 12; 1 Kgs 8:12-51; 2 Kgs 17 (the peroration of Samaria); 2 Kgs 22 & 23 (Josiah's reform), 25 (the fall of the southern kingdom).

**Recommended:** *Face*, "Historiography of the OT," pp. 145-75

**THE CONQUEST & SETTLEMENT: THE ERA OF THE JUDGES & THE TRIBAL LEAGUE**

The Books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth

Atlas, pp. 38-45, "Conquests," "Occupation," etc.

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 138-164 "Joshua" "Judges"

de Vaux, pp. 91-98, "The Israelite Concept of State"

**Recommended:** Wm. Dever, "Is There Any Archaeological Evidence for the Exodus?" in *Exodus: The Egyptian Evidence*, pp. 67-86

1/18 **THE RISE OF THE UNITED MONARCHY & ISRAEL'S GOLDEN AGE**

**quiz**

1 Kings 1:1-9:9

Dumbrell, "Samuel-Kings," 81-104

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, 165-196 "Birth of Monarchy," "Golden Age"

"David Found at Dan" *BAR* 20/2 (March/April 1994): 74-87 (this article can be accessed through the Biblical Archaeology Review Archive link at the library. Simply log on, click on the archive, and enter some of the bibliographic data into the search fields)

Atlas [**review** pp. 48-51], pp. 52-57, "The Economy of Solomon's Kingdom," etc.

**Recommended:**

Philip Davies, "'House of David' Built on Sand," 54-55 (available through *BAR* archive)

Anson Rainey, "'House of David' and the House of the Reconstructionists," 47 (available through *BAR* archive)

de Vaux, "The Temple at Jerusalem," pp. 331-344

**THE POETS & SAGES OF ISRAEL: THE BOOK OF PSALMS & THE WISDOM LITERATURE**

Psalms: 1, 2, 3, 8, 44, 46, 73, 88, 95, 96, 111, 150 (note divisions of five Books)

Proverbs: 1, 2, 3. 22:17-23:11 (note ANE parallels), 30, 31

Ecclesiastes

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 231-242, 425-470

Dumbrell, "Psalms-Proverbs," 245-273

Add ANET readings: "I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom," "Instructions of Amenhotep," and "Dialogue of Pessimism"

**Recommended:** LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 471-519 (read selectively)

1/19     **THE DIVIDED MONARCHY**

quiz

1 Kings 11:1-22:53 (Ahijah & Elijah); 2 Kgs 18-23:27 (Hezekiah, Manasseh & Josiah)

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 197-220, "The Divided Monarchy"

de Vaux, pp. 100-137, "The Person of the King," etc.

**Recommended:** *Face*, "The Historical Study of the Monarchy: Developments & Detours," pp. 207-235

**THE OFFICE OF THE PROPHET:**

**Reread:** Deuteronomy, chptrs 13 & 18

**Read:** LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 221-230 (see chart, pp. 224-226); 243-269.

Childs, "The Office & Function of the Prophet," pp. 122-142

[Review *TDOT*, "tyrb," pp. 276-279]

**Recommended:** Theodore Mullen, "Divine Assembly" *ABD* 2:214-17; (1 Kgs 22:1-40; Isa 6; Jer 23:18, 22; Amos 3:7, 8; Malachi 3:1)

**THE WRITINGS OF THE PROPHETS: CONTENT & HERMENEUTICS**

quiz

Dumbrell, "Isaiah," 107-132

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, "Jeremiah," pp. 328-355

Hosea chapters 1-4: **Hosea**

Isaiah 1, 3-9:7, 36-38, 40: **Isaiah**

Jeremiah chapters 1-5; 7 and 31 (cf. Hebrews chptrs 8 & 9): **Jeremiah**

**Recommended:** YHWH's prophets sent to Assyria: Jonah & Nahum

1/20     **THE COLLAPSE OF THE MONARCHY & THE EXILIC COMMUNITY: DANIEL & EZEKIEL**

Malamat, "Caught Between the Great Powers: the Fall of Judah" *BAR* (July/Aug 1999): 34-41, 64 (available through *BAR* archive)

Atlas, pp. 88-89, "Nebuchadnezzar"

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, "Daniel," " 566-582

Dumbrell, "Ezekiel," 151-170

Ezekiel chptrs 1-3, 10

Daniel chptrs 1-4, 7

**Recommended:** G.E. Ladd, "Apocalyptic," *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* pp. 62-65.

**THE CHRONICLER'S HISTORY: THE RETURN & RESTORATION OF  
THE POST-EXILIC COMMUNITY**

quiz

1 Chronicles chptrs 1-14, 23; 2 Chron 1, 9, 36; Ezra chptrs 1-6; Nehemiah 8-9

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 532-565, "Chronicler," "Ezra-Nehemiah," "Esther"

Atlas, pp. 90-91, "The Persian Empire"

**THE INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD READING:**

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, "Formation of the Old Testament," pp. 606-618

Atlas pp. 92-103; 1 & 2 Maccabees (read selectively)

**Recommended:** de Vaux, "The Priesthood (before & after the temple)," pp. 372-405

**FINAL EXAM: Thursday 1/26, 9:00-11:00 am**